

Natural Communities of Louisiana



Coastal Dune Shrub Thicket

Rarity Rank: S1/G3?

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Synonyms: Beach dune thicket

Ecological Systems:

CES203.469 Louisiana Beach

General Description:

- Occurs on established sand dunes and beach ridges on barrier islands and the mainland coast
- Very limited extent in Louisiana due to poorly developed coastal dune system
- Sites are typically xeric (dry) to xeric/mesic and moderately exposed to salt spray
- Normally appears as a relatively dense stand of shrubs
- A variety of salt-tolerant shrubs occur, that are often covered with a dense growth of lichens
- May be destroyed by sand dune migration or erosion and may be replaced by Coastal Dune Grassland
- Often serve as important nesting areas for colonial waterbirds

Plant Community Associates

Common species include:

Morella cerifera (wax myrtle)

Iva spp. (marsh elder)

Zanthoxylum clava-herculis (toothache tree)

Lycium carolinianum (Christmas berry)

Smilax spp. (greenbriers)

Ipomea stolonifera (beach morning-glory)

Ilex vomitoria (yaupon)

Baccharis halimifolia (saltbush)

Acacia smallii (acacia)

Opuntia sp. (prickly pear cactus)

Vitis mustangensis (wild grape)

I. pes-caprae (goat-foot morning-glory)

Federally-listed plant & animal species:

Pelecanus occidentalis (brown pelican)

Endangered (PS:E); G4; S2



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Range:

Coastal dune shrub thickets are estimated to have occupied less than 2,000 acres in presettlement times, and 50 to 75% was thought to remain prior to the 2005 hurricanes. The most extensive examples of coastal dune thickets are generally found on Louisiana's barrier islands and the Chenier Plain of southwest Louisiana.

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Barataria, Terrebonne, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine

Threats:

- Shoreline erosion
- Construction of roads, pipelines or utilities
- Contamination by chemicals, industrial discharge, or oil spills
- Off-road vehicle use
- Invasive, exotic species
- Overgrazing

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Prevent conversion of existing natural communities to other land uses
- Shoreline or island stabilization
- Prohibit off-road vehicle use
- Remove any invasive, exotic plant species with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means
- Prohibit livestock grazing

